

REMARKS

Claims 27-36 are in the case. Claims 14-26 have been cancelled herein, claim 27 has been amended, and claims 28-36 have been added. Claims 28-36 correspond to the claims that depended from claim 14.

Applicant wishes first to thank the Examiner for considering the draft response faxed by Applicant's representative, Celia Leber, and for the Examiner's courteous voicemail to Ms. Leber.

Claim 27 has been amended to add the language regarding the characteristics of the strut that was suggested by the Examiner at page 4 of the office action. The word "elongated" with respect to the footpads has been deleted, as it is believed that this term has no bearing on patentability and is unnecessarily limiting. Applicant gratefully acknowledges the Examiner's preliminary indication that claim 27 may be allowable, in the Examiner's voicemail of January 18.

Claims directed to the subject matter of the non-elected species have been included in the dependent claims added in the present amendment, as it is believed that these claims can now be properly rejoined due to the presence of an allowable generic claim (claim 27).

Claim 20 has been objected to as being a duplicate of claim 19. This error has been corrected in the new claims.

Claims 14-17, 24 and 25 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yu in view of Namiki, and claims 19-22 have been rejected as unpatentable over these references further combined with Sheldon. These rejections have been rendered moot by the cancellation of these claims.

Claim 27 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yeh in view of Namiki. While Applicants do not concede that the claims as previously presented are unpatentable, in order to expedite prosecution claim 27 has been amended as suggested by the Examiner in the "note" on page 4 of the office action. Applicants appreciate the courtesy of the Examiner in suggesting allowable subject matter. Applicants respectfully request allowance of claim 27 and the claims that depend therefrom.

Applicant : Steven Dickinson Potter
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Enclosed is a \$60.00 check for the Petition for Extension of Time fee. Please apply any other charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 1-20-06



Celia H. Leber
Reg. No. 33,524

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Fish & Richardson P.C.
225 Franklin Street
Boston, MA 02110
Telephone: (617) 542-5070
Facsimile: (617) 542-8906